

OBITUARY—GILLIAN PERRY (NÉE JENKINS) 1943–2011

Gillian Perry, one of Australia's foremost botanical nomenclaturists, and a former member and office bearer of the Royal Society of Western Australia passed away unexpectedly in August 2011.

Born in Perth, Gillian was the only child of two well-known Western Australian zoologists Cleo Francis Howard Jenkins and Eileen Jenkins, both long-time members and office bearers of the Royal Society.

Gillian attended the University of Western Australia, graduating with a Bachelor of Science, with a major in Botany in 1967. A student of Professor Brian Grieve her initial interest was in plant physiology and after positions with the Forests Department and the University's Institute of Agriculture, she moved to research position at Macquarie University working on plant hormones. An MSc degree with a thesis on gibberellins, completed under Professor Arthur McComb, was awarded in 1974.

In 1971 Gillian returned to Perth and joined the Western Australian Herbarium, then a part of the Western Australian Department of Agriculture. Gillian's initial work, for the Flora of Australia, was on the genus *Logania*, however her interest turned to the neglected weed flora of the state and she quickly became the authority for weedy plant identification and nomenclature for the Agricultural Protection Board officers, Agricultural Advisors and farmers of the state's vast agricultural areas.

From 1973 to 1980 Gillian, and husband Michael Perry, served on the Council of the Royal Society as Joint Honorary Secretaries. This followed a long family tradition as her father Cleo Jenkins is the Society's longest serving President.

Gillian's work on the weed flora of Western Australia led to a growing interest in nomenclature, the branch of taxonomy concerned with the application of plant names, and following her retirement from the Western Australian Herbarium in April 1994, she devoted the rest of her life to the pursuit of nomenclatural stability in taxonomy. An intensely private person, her role in global nomenclature was not well known but had international impact. She attended, and was active in, the Nomenclature Sections of every International Botanical Congress from 1981 to 2011, a span of 30 years.

During that time she authored or co-authored no fewer than 69 proposals to amend and clarify the Botanical Code, also serving on the Permanent Nomenclature Committee for Vascular Plants from 1999 until her death in 2011. She had a special interest in lectotypification and the recommendations of the Special Committee set up in 1987, of which she was a member, were very important in clarifying the rules on this difficult area. Gillian's many contributions were specifically recognised in the Acknowledgements of the Committees report.



The XVIII International Botanical Congress held in Melbourne in July 2011 will be remembered as historic, with three major decisions regarding botanical nomenclature: electronic publication of names, the cessation of mandatory Latin for diagnoses, and changes to the handling of fungal names. Gillian was involved in all of these. She was particularly instrumental in finding a solution and consensus to the thorniest issues involved in the latter, and for her efforts, the report of the mycological section of the congress named her an 'honorary mycologist'.

It was in returning to Perth following the Congress that Gillian died, in her sleep, at Ceduna, South Australia. She is survived by husband Michael Perry.

(Michael Perry with the assistance of
Kevin Thiele and John McNeill)